

April 2026

Daugavpils University Consolidated Institutional Assessment



Final report



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1 Summary of Unit-Level Performance

DU submitted three units of assessment to the international evaluation.

- Research programme “Humanities and Arts” had 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts in 2024. It was judged to be a ‘strong international player’ (score 4) overall and scored 4 also in terms of quality of research, research impact and societal impact. Economic impact, environment and development potential were judged to be ‘good’ (3)
- Research Programme “Social Sciences” had 36 FTE posts in 2024. It was judged overall to be ‘good (3), as were all individual dimensions of assessment except social impact, which was ‘very good’ (4)
- Research Programme “Natural Sciences” had 91 FTE posts in 2024. The Expert Group awarded it an overall score of ‘good’ (3), but the scores for the individual components were somewhat mixed. Scientific quality and impact were both ‘adequate’ (2). Economic impact and development potential were both ‘good’ (3). Societal impact and environment were both seen as ‘very good’ (4)

All three units’ societal impact was thus seen as ‘very strong’, better than their ‘good’ economic impact, perhaps reflecting their importance to the regional community. Research performance varied. Humanities – where total employment fell by 30%, while the proportion of researchers fell from 56% to 48%, during the assessment period – had ‘very strong’ research quality and scientific impact. Social sciences – where both employment and researcher-intensity were flat during the period – was ‘very good’. In the natural sciences unit, total employment decreased by approximately 10% over the evaluation period. At the same time, the share of staff actively involved in research, remained broadly unchanged. Although the unit received a very good score for its research environment and infrastructure, the overall assessment was ‘adequate’. This reflects the expert judgement that the scale and outcomes of research activity have not yet fully matched the potential suggested by the available research environment. DU’s overall score of ‘good’ (3) therefore conceals important differences in research.

Full details of the unit’s FTEs and scores are in Appendices A and B.

2 Institutional Context

DU is a small (2000 students) regional university in Eastern Latvia that plays an important role in higher education and research in the Latgale region. Originally established over a century ago as a teacher training college, it has over time evolved a broad range of undergraduate courses and ten doctoral programmes in the humanities, social and natural sciences. In recent years, it has built research programmes across departments and reorganised into two broad faculties, respectively of Natural Sciences and Healthcare and Humanities and Social Sciences. Given the challenges that the institution faces, particularly in terms of recruitment and retention of high quality staff, this is commendable, and demonstrates a step change since the last evaluation. Nevertheless it is also clear that there is still a considerable way to go before this is a secure institution in terms of its research profile.

The approach of the Daugavpils University to implement the recommendations from the previous International Evaluation of Scientific Institutions Activity (2019/2020) is sound and credible. DU claims to have responded by:



- Implementing incentives to promote research excellence, including funding for Open Access and a performance-based motivation system that provides individualised support for research development and publication activities
- Strengthening its global footprint by launching deep institutional alliances (e.g., Open EU) and expanding critical network memberships, including European university alliances, international research consortia, and disciplinary scholarly associations
- Fostering transdisciplinarity and its applied focus
- Expanding doctoral programmes for global talent attraction

The report addresses the recommendations point-by-point, but could have highlighted better what were the gains achieved by each particular recommended action.

The defined and implemented mission, vision, strategy and governance approach of the Daugavpils University and its units are credible and appropriate, guided by its “Strategy 2022-2028” framework, which was developed through seminars and working groups using SWOT/TOWS analysis and stakeholder input. This strategy is implemented through three institutional priorities – education, research and governance – with individual implementation plans linked to funding. Starting, updating and discontinuing fields remains somewhat unclear: there is reporting on the criteria and justification used, but there are no details on “who/how”.

The Institution-level strategy and its implementation appear fit to enable maintenance and improvement of research quality. The strategic framework appears to operate top-down and bottom-up contributions to forging strategy are not identified in the report clearly, e.g. to what extent are units delegated to define their own strengths and propose new thematic areas. There is appropriate recognition of the dynamic nature of strategic planning and its limitations, evidenced by substantial restructuring in 2023. Further refinement and adjustments are expected through KPI-based mechanisms; however, it is unclear how and how often KPIs and management process are revised and changed. Furthermore, the report does not reveal mechanisms for exchange of concepts and best practice among the units, with the aim to align with the best performers.

DU is implementing an institution-wide process to manage and quality-assure doctoral training, via the unified Doctoral School. This serves as an institution-wide platform to manage and quality-assure doctoral training, providing consistency in the governance of the three strategic pillars: talent attraction, cross-disciplinarity and professional integration, but it is not yet clear that this now amounts to an ‘integrated pipeline’ for developing and retaining academic staff, meaning a structured progression from doctoral training through postdoctoral stages to stable academic careers; indeed recruitment and retention of staff remains a significant challenge. The report would have gained from a clear statement on training of students and supervisors, as well as monitoring of the relevant processes.

3 Overall Institutional Score and Rationale

Assigned overall score: **3 (good), a strong national player with some international recognition**

The Daugavpils University of Applied Sciences is a strong national player with some international recognition. The research of all three units possesses or exceeds a good standard of research quality, with an average sustained at a good level. The average of the overall scores of the three units is above the threshold for good performance, while across the evaluation criteria applied by the disciplinary panels the scores are reasonably well balanced. DU is strongest in social impact. On research quality, the average score is good, however the biggest unit (Research Programme in Natural Sciences, accounting for more than half of the academics and researchers in DU) has the lowest score, less than the threshold for good. Humanities and



Arts scored consistently best or equal, with the exception of Research Environment and infrastructure, where Natural Sciences lead.

4 Recommendations

DU faces a triple challenge of reinforcing its local value in its role as a regional university, strengthening its links to, and membership of, international research communities, and levelling up the quality and scientific impact of research across the university. Clear progress has been made at organisational level via common management and governance, strengthening doctoral education by linking with other Latvian universities, and laying the ground for increased economic impact through the REBUS research and business centre. The next step is to support the deployment of these changes at the unit level by

- Increasing the focus on publishing in high-quality international journals, especially those in Q1, and avoiding local or 'predatory' journals. This can be supported by using successful authors within the university to mentor less experienced ones and seeking joint authorships with successful authors outside DU, for example, by leveraging joint PhD supervision. Such collaboration may also include joint supervision of doctoral students and co-authored publications involving PhD candidates and their supervisors.
- Increasing support from the centre of the university for proposal-writing, especially in highly competitive international programmes
- Increased efforts to build networks with researchers outside the university who can become research collaborators, for example through COST networks
- Taking a broad approach to economic impact through REBUS and other channels, focusing on partnership and support, including collaboration with regional companies and public organisations, knowledge transfer activities, applied research projects, and support for innovation and entrepreneurship.



Appendix A FTE academic and research staff at units as reported in the self-evaluation reports

	FTE academic and research staff at units as reported in the self-evaluation reports																	
	2019			2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		
Unit	Academic	Research	Total	Academic	Research	Total	Academic	Research	Total	Academic	Research	Total	Academic	Research	Total	Academic	Research	Total
Research programme "Humanities and arts"	31.9	25.4	57.3	30.4	24.4	54.8	30.4	24.3	54.7	27.9	23	50.9	24.3	20.4	44.7	21.1	19.4	40.5
Research programme "Social Sciences"	27.3	10	37.3	26.4	10	36.4	26.7	8.9	35.6	24.7	11.2	35.9	22.8	10.2	33	27.2	8.9	53
Research programme "Natural Sciences"	18.26	81.16	99.42	18.58	79.02	97.6	17.05	77.65	94.7	17.19	82.55	99.74	14.34	79.33	93.67	14.02	76.62	90.64



Appendix B Unit scores assigned by disciplinary Expert Groups and Institutional Score

Unit	Unit scores assigned by disciplinary Expert Groups						
	Overall score	Quality of research	Impact on the discipline	Economic impact	Social impact	Research environment & infrastructure	Development potential
Research programme "Humanities and arts"	4	4	4	3	4	3	3
Research programme "Social Sciences"	3	3	3	3	4	3	3
Research programme "Natural Sciences"	3	2	2	3	4	4	3

Assigned overall score: **3 (good), a strong national player with some international recognition.**